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ABSTRACT

University adult education in Britain must seek to uplift ordinary people (as opposed to condescending to them) by helping them share the experience of "the best art, the best knowledge and ideas of out time." Universities must be prepared to serve the community and put their ideas to the test of everyday life while upholding the standards of scholarship. Adult education is indispensable, especially in view of the great social and educational inequality remaining in British society. However, such education must be part of a total cultural strategy involving better school education, theaters, art galleries, arts centers, and the best use of broadcasting at national, regional, and local levels. (Thirty-one references are included.) (LY)

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CULTURE AND EQUALITY

the role of adult education

An inaugural lecture by
Professor Roy Shaw, Director of Adult Education
At the University of Keele, October 1969

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Introduction

I should like to take as my starting point the following incident at a recent international conference in Sweden of distinguished academics and writers. Two of them, W. H. Auden and Arthur Koestler, were waiting for a taxi they had booked to take them to a meeting. The taxi came, Auden told the driver their names, and the driver said : "Auden and Koestler? Never heard of them!" A Greek colleague laughed, and said : "There, you see, we are back in the real world". In this lecture I am concerned with the gap between the academic world and the so-called "real world", and the role of adult education in bridging that gap.

My title owes something to the date. 1969 is a good year to discuss culture, equality and adult education. It is the centenary year of the publication of Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy,* once described as "the finest apology for education in the English language"[1]. It is also the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the Report of the Ministry of Reconstruction, set up during the First World War to advise on the development of adult education after the war. This is usually described as *The 1919 Report,* and that is how I shall refer to it in this lecture. It has come to be regarded as the bible of adult education. By now it should perhaps be regarded as the Old Testament, and we await the New Testament from the Russell Committee, which this year began the first major enquiry into adult education since 1919.

Definitions

Let me first clear the ground by trying to define my terms. The word *culture* is a slippery one, and has several meanings. Matthew Arnold speaks of culture as "the pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know the best that has been thought and said in the world". That is the sense in which I am using it in this lecture, though I would take the best that has been thought and said to include science as well as the arts, business studies as well as ballet. Narrower usage of the word is partly responsible for the fact that it has "often provoked hostility and embarrassment"[2]. For my part, I like the word and suggest that if we can happily use "agriculture" for improvement of the land, and "physical culture" for the improvement of the body, we should not find it strange to use "culture" for the improvement of the whole person.

What about *equality?* This could be even more difficult, but I will be brief and say that when I talk about human equality I emphatically do not mean that all men are the same in physical and mental endowments, although anti-egalitarians always say that this is what the champions of equality in education stand for. What we really stand for is the right of all to equal consideration. The essence of equality is what Lord Lindsay, the founder of this university, declared to be the essence of democracy: the belief expressed in the seventeenth century proposition that "the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the richest he"[3]. That belief has been the dynamic behind all leading figures in adult education—of whom Lord Lindsay was one. For some it is rooted in religious belief : all men and women are equal in the sight of God. For others, it is derived from non-religious beliefs about the dignity and worth of the

human person. R. H. Tawney, the social historian who taught the first university tutorial course at Longton over sixty years ago, and whose help in the foundation of this university is commemorated in the name of its first teaching building, has pointed out that it is vain for those who share a belief in equality to quarrel about the reasons why they believe. Humanism, said Tawney, using the term to mean concern for the good of humanity, desires to cultivate the best powers in all men, not only in the few. Although a Christian himself, he denied that such humanism was "the exclusive possession of either those who reject some particular body of religious doctrine or of those who accept it. It is, or can be, the possession of both"[4]. With that generous judgment I profoundly agree.

And now a word about the third part of my title : *adult education*. It is an activity for which a bewildering variety of other names are used : university extension, extramural studies, continuing education, *éducation permanente,* life-long education, and workers' education. I shall use *adult education* as this is still the most generally accepted and all-embracing term, but it does raise the question of what or when is an adult? It is not simply a matter of age, for many full-time students in university or technical college are as old as those in adult education courses. The best short definition I know of 'adult' for the purpose of adult education, is that it is "people engaged in the ordinary business of life"—if you like, people who belong to the "real world".

"The Apostles of Equality"

Having, I hope, made clear what I mean by culture, equality and adult education, let me now begin to consider the possible relations between them. I would like to do this by quoting a key passage from Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy,* one which I first discovered just before I began to teach in adult education. It still inspires me, and apparently impresses many others, since it is now frequently quoted. It cannot, however, be too widely known :

> Culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater!—the passion for making them *prevail.* It is not satisfied till we *all* come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light . . . Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party . . . Culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere . . .
>
> This is the *social idea;* and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive, to

humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light.

Now, I know the criticisms which have been levelled against Arnold, the insipid vagueness of the term "sweetness and light", and the fact that in other writings he expressed less confidence about extending culture to the whole community, but that does not detract from the value of this central declaration, and the rest of this lecture will look at the implications of it, a hundred years later.

Equality versus culture ?

Let me first face an argument, which has been forcibly expressed in 1969 by the writers of the two *Black Papers on Education,* that you cannot have both culture and equality. They warn against the threat of mediocrity and anarchy caused by "the ideology of egalitarianism" a phrase which uses two nasty-sounding words for what I would rather call 'a belief in human equality'. Curiously, the writers deal with both school and university education, but have nothing to say about adult education. Perhaps the omission is a compliment, for the *Black Papers* define egalitarianism as levelling down. Adult education is essentially a process of levelling up. But the question remains : Can it be done? One of the most famous formulations of the possible danger of extending culture is to be found in an unlikely place : *A Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire,* published in New York in 1926 by M. I. Rostovtzeff. Here is what he said :

> Our civilization will not last unless it be a civilization not of one class, but of the masses . . . But the ultimate problem remains like a ghost, ever present and unlaid : is it possible to extend a higher civilization to the lower classes without debasing its standards and diluting its quality to the vanishing point? Is not every civilization bound to decay as soon as it begins to penetrate the masses?

More recently, and nearer home, the late T. S. Eliot solved the "ultimate problem" to his own satisfaction. For him, culture must belong to an élite attached to the dominant class of society : "It is an essential condition of the preservation of the quality of the culture of the minority, that it should continue to be a minority culture". If the reader believes in equality, then says Eliot, "I merely ask him to stop paying lip service to culture"[6].

So here we have first a cautious warning that the wider diffusion of culture *may* lead to cultural decay, and a dogmatic declaration that it *must.* I take the historian's warning and reject Mr. Eliot's dogma. Mass democracy will mean cultural decay *unless* the state spends more money on education, including adult education, unless it generously endows the arts, and unless it restrains the commercial providers of pop culture who seek to exploit the cultural immaturity of the majority.

The necessity of adult education

Quality and equality can be combined, but only by prolonged educational effort. Hence the emphasis of adult educators on the need for life-long education. I hasten to assure you that in my book, this does not mean life-long attendance at adult education courses, since one of the fruits of education should be the capacity for self-education.

In spite of the fact that Frederick Maurice showed over a century ago that the establishment of adult education historically preceded that of juvenile education[7], most people still tend to think of education as something for the young. It almost seems as though we need a war to make us recognise the value of adult education. *The 1919 Report,* at the end of the First World War, emphatically declared (in capital letters) that :

> ADULT EDUCATION MUST NOT BE REGARDED AS A LUXURY FOR A FEW EXCEPTIONAL PERSONS HERE AND THERE, NOR AS A THING WHICH CONCERNS ONLY A SHORT SPAN OF EARLY MANHOOD, BUT . . . ADULT EDUCATION IS A PERMANENT NATIONAL NECESSITY, AN INSEPARABLE ASPECT OF CITIZENSHIP, AND THEREFORE SHOULD BE BOTH UNIVERSAL AND LIFE-LONG.[8]

Near the end of the Second World War, a Government White Paper on Educational Reconstruction again emphasised that "without provision for adult education, the national system must be incomplete". It added a new insight, that "the measure of effectiveness of earlier education is the extent to which in some form or another it is continued voluntarily in later life"[9]. Nevertheless, I have recently heard it said that adult education is no longer necessary, however valuable it might have been in the past. I believe it to be more necessary, not less, at a time when we are told that knowledge doubles every ten years, that existing knowledge and skills become obsolescent at an alarming rate, so that one person may need two or more periods of professional education in a lifetime. According to Margaret Mead, the most vivid truth of the new age is that "No one will live all his life in the world into which he was born, and no one will die in the world in which he worked in his maturity . . . In this world, no one can "complete" an education"[10].

In spite of this, adult education remains the Cinderella of education, accounting for less than one per cent of the total educational budget. The belief that youth is the time for learning dies hard, although it is nearly thirty years since Sir Richard Livingstone argued that many subjects, like history, economics or literature, are best studied by mature people. He did not claim to be making an educational discovery, but to be reminding people of "an ignored educational principle" which was at least two thousand years old—Aristotle argued that a boy "though he may be a mathematician, cannot be a philosopher".

It is sometimes argued that adults are too old to learn. Yet it is many years since the American psychologist, Thorndike, said that his research showed that "age in itself is a minor factor in learning. Capacity, interest, energy and time are the essentials". Many internal university teachers have said that they often find adult students more rewarding to teach than most undergraduates. I must concede that there are, of course, a few disadvantages about adults as students. They have been cruelly catalogued by a professor with long experience of teaching, who says that the callowness of the young is far less off-putting than the faults of maturity, which he characterises as: "ingrained conceit, calculated cruelty, deep-rooted cowardice, slobbering greed, vulgar self-satisfaction, puffy laziness of mind and body"[11]. One can't help feeling that this writer, who has taught classics for many years in English and American universities, has been unfortunate in his experience of adults. Nevertheless, there is some truth in his strictures, and I quote them as a corrective to the tendency of adult educators, including myself, to exaggerate the undoubted virtues of adults as students. Those strictures also offer a clue to the difficulty of bringing adult educa-

tion to those whom *the Times* used to call "top people". They find it difficult to learn, not so much because their learning capacity has deteriorated, as because they have too much prestige to lose if they return to a learning situation.

Universities and adult education

Granted that adult education is necessary, does it follow that universities should do it? Isn't it something that can be left to other bodies like the Workers' Educational Association or the Local Authorities? That is said to be the attitude of French universities, and it has been forcibly expressed by the Rector of the University of Strasbourg:

> French higher education cannot possibly be made directly responsible for adult education . . . To include such a task among the duties of a university professor would be . . . to play down to the common man, which would be of no use or benefit to anyone . . . And if it is suggested that there might be a special staff of professors to provide this service I would reply that, in my opinion, it is the very negation of a university professor's function that he should be compelled to reduce the quality of his teaching by several levels and that he should then have to lecture to an audience which does not possess the knowledge and which probably does not possess a sufficient degree of culture or intelligence to understand him[12].

Such a statement suggests a remoteness from the "real world" which fortunately does not characterise the general attitude of English and American universities—although an American professor of adult education has confessed that many university teachers regard adult education with "uneasy suspicion", partly because they fear excessive claims on their time, partly because they fear vulgarisation. He says that a quirk of the English alphabet apparently couples "adult education" with "adulteration" as the heading of a page in *The Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences,* and that some university teachers think this coupling is not inappropriate. In Britain, however, it is generally accepted that there is an obligation on universities to play, as the Robbins Report put it, "an important role in the general cultural life of the communities in which they are situated".

The French Rector's remark about the absurdity of a university professor having to "play down to the common man" touches the nub of the problem of culture and equality. The shortest and sharpest reply to it is provided by Lord Rutherford, who is reported to have said that if a scientist in his laboratory could not explain to the woman who scrubbed the laboratory floor what he was doing, then he did not know what he was doing[13]. There is doubtless exaggeration here, but any experienced adult educator knows that it is possible to present most university subjects in a way that is intelligible to the layman. Indeed, this French attitude had been anticipated and rebutted in *The 1919 Report,* which affirmed as one of its basic propositions :

> That while it is true that the great mass of a people in the modern industrial world cannot study Blue Books or become close students of history, geography or economics, yet it is also true, and a truth brought out by this war, that there is latent in the mass of our people a capacity far beyond what was recognised, a capacity to rise to the conception of great issues and to face the difficulties of fundamental problems when these can be visualised in a familiar form[14].

I believe that it is not only in adult education, but also in undergraduate teaching, that scholars need to make an effort to communicate their subject to non-specialists.

I find support from a leading literary critic. Professor Graham Hough, discussing what he calls the crisis in literary education, says that the vast majority of students who do literature are not going to be professional scholars, and that a good deal of contemporary critical writing is above the heads of the middle range of students, let alone those at the lower end of the scale. He suggests that professors of English literature would be happier and more useful "if they reserved their specialised efforts for the very few, and if they had a much wider and livelier role in spreading literary sympathies and interests among a much larger body of students who are not specially engaged with literature at all"[15]. Professor J. H. Plumb has made the same point in respect of history. The prime activity of historians, he says, "should be to teach non-historians, not to perpetuate its own practitioners"[16].

"Only connect"

Dr. Desmond Morris, who has made a fortune out of popularising science, has retorted to his academic critics by saying that they seem to think it is vulgar to write anything the layman can understand. Dr. Morris may be accused of bias in his own favour, but the same point has been made by others who may not. Lord Morris of Grasmere, for many years a Vice-Chancellor, asserts that it is only a slight exaggeration to say that "no chemist . . . feels happy about a statement which anybody but a professional chemist can understand"[17], and an American professor of economics admits that economists are less able than they used to be to communicate even with other intellectuals, let alone with the layman[18]. Science is perhaps the most difficult subject to get across to the layman. It does not figure largely in most adult education programmes, and where it does it is often either over-simplified or taught to people who already have some background of science. A conference of adult education science tutors in 1966, is reported to have agreed that "courses in general science for those with little or no scientific training ("Science for the non-scientist") almost invariably fail"[19]. Lord Ritchie Calder, who for many years mediated between leading scientists and the general public in the columns of popular newspapers, disagrees: "I have always maintained", he says, "and immodestly can claim to have proved it, that there is no concept in science too difficult for the ordinary person to grasp when it is descriptively explained. What defeats the science writer is mathematics, but then mathematics is a language which has to be learned. If a science writer uses mathematics, it is like a pretentious writer throwing in Latin, or Greek, or French quotations for effect"[20].

Those last words remind me of a classic example of the failure to speak intelligibly to laymen, provided by no less a figure than John Ruskin. When he was Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford he was determined to be heard by a wider audience, and began a series of open letters addressed "to the workmen and labourers of Great Britain". These were collected under the title *Fors Clavigera,* a title whose meaning was, of course, as transparent to the working men of 1871, as it is to all of us today.

Surprisingly, in view of the special difficulty of communicating science to the layman, it is Sir Eric Ashby, a scientist who has combined distinction in his own field with a lively interest in adult education, who has most eloquently warned that it is not merely a duty of university scholars to share their learning with the laymen, but it is very much in their own interest. Sir Eric Ashby believes the danger of much modern scholarship is that it is so specialised that it has scarcely any audience—less than, for

example, Darwin's writings a century ago. Sir Eric sees in this development a potential threat to academic freedom :

> For if the man in the street does not understand something of what universities are doing, if he gets his impressions of universities from student rags, science fiction and the cheap dailies, he can scarcely be expected to behave like an enlightened patron. So the interpretation of academic knowledge to the public becomes . . . the chief safeguard for the autonomy of the universities.
>
> It does not matter that universities depend on patronage. They always have. What matters is that the patrons should be enlightened by those who enjoy their patronage[21].

That was said in 1955, but over sixty years earlier a prominent figure in the University Extension movement declared that if the universities and adult education were ever separated, he would look upon such a severance as "a far more serious evil for the universities than for the popular movement"[22]. About the same time, a Northumberland miner who had benefited from University Extension lectures provided by the University of Cambridge, wrote that : "All at once, Cambridge and everything pertaining to it becomes interesting, and the class to which the lecturer belongs is regarded with generous feelings"[23]. Today, the universities need these "generous feelings" as much as they ever did. Hence, when internal teachers do adult education, they are not doing it as a favour to the Department of Adult Education. They are doing it for the university as a whole, and for the local community. Adult education is perhaps the most important part of a university's relations with the local community, though heaven forbid that it should be done primarily as a "public relations" exercise in the special sense of that term. Incidentally, they are also doing it for their own benefit. I am not here referring to the financial reward, so much as the value to the university teacher of having to re-think the presentation of his subject to an adult, lay audience. Many university teachers from Tawney onwards have spoken of this benefit.

The 1919 Report led to the establishment of extramural departments in universities. I have heard it said that in later life, Tawney, who had been a leading member of the committee which produced the report, wondered whether this development had been altogether wise, since it enabled the rest of the university to feel that adult education could now be left to one department, and was no longer a responsibility of the university as a whole. Hence, it is not surprising that the Vice-Chancellor of the recently founded University of Lancaster should have felt that universities "had gone too far in sub-contracting their extramural responsibilities to special staff", and was interested rather in "finding the right form of organisation for encouraging extramural work by regular members of the university staff"[24]. Because I believe that adult education requires special aptitudes and skills, not only in teaching but also in organisation and promotion, I do not think the Lancaster solution will work, but I do agree that many heads of adult education departments (including myself) have not sufficiently mobilised the talents of their whole university.

Education and experience

One thing that the university teacher gains in adult education teaching is what has been called "the necessary dialectic between education and experience", or between the academic world and the "real world". Thomas Hardy's novel, *Jude the Obscure,* is commonly read simply as the story of the tragic deprivation of a working man who

wished to enter university, but Hardy makes it clear that the university itself was the poorer as a result of his exclusion. In 1907, twelve years after *Jude* was written, a real life workman, J. M. MacTavish, was telling the University of Oxford :

> I claim for my class all the best that Oxford have to give . . . I emphasise that . . . work people could do more for Oxford, than Oxford can do for the work people; for, remember, democracy will realise itself with or without the assistance of Oxford[25].

E. P. Thompson, a former tutor in adult education, now Reader in the History of Labour at Warwick University, comments that this challenge could no longer be put with any conviction in this class-defined and politically challenging way; but that much of what MacTavish was saying remains true, and "universities need the abrasion of different worlds of experience in which ideas are brought to the test of life"[26]. Oxford did respond to MacTavish's challenge, and began to collaborate with the recently founded Workers' Educational Association, leading to the establishment in the following year of that famous tutorial class in Longton, taught by R. H. Tawney, This began a partnership which continues to this day, and has enriched both common life and the life of the universities, although in most areas both universities and the W.E.A. now do a good deal of their work independently of each other.

Today, industry itself looks to universities not only for graduates, but for the further education of both workers and management. I have already suggested that some university teachers are too remote from the world outside. Now I must redress the balance and say that whilst in business the customer is always right, in education the 'customer', though he knows what he *wants,* does not always know what he *needs.* This is true whether the 'customer' is an industrialist or a revolutionary student claiming the right to decide the content of a course. As a result of the Industrial Training Act, firms are now spending much more money on training, but though they see clearly the value of training in techniques, they tend to neglect one of the Central Training Council's objectives, namely "to widen the trainee's understanding of the society in which he lives and develop him as a person"[27]. This goes beyond training into education, education which the university is eminently suited to provide. Hence the need for dialogue, in which the scholar's ideas are brought to the test of life, and the industrialist's ideas are brought to the test of scholarship. Lord Lindsay, in a broadcast talk, expressed memorably the point I am trying to make. He was rebutting the idea that universities could just be their beautiful selves in isolation from the world. "Just as they are served by, so they must serve the community", he said. But he went on :

> They have to serve the community in their own characteristic ways. They are not to do everything that the community may ask them to do, if that would destroy their higher powers of giving the community what no other institutions can give it, but supply its high needs they must[28].

"Culture" may sound remote from industry's needs, but not if you remember that it means cultivating the powers of the individual, as for example in management development.

One of the false beliefs about education today is the notion that talks and lectures alone can make men wise. It is found in the industrialists who put too much faith in short conferences, and in culture-vultures who gobble up scraps of knowledge. Any education worth the name involves prolonged hard work by the recipient as well as

the giver. One of the best adult students I ever had was the middle-aged mother of a large family. At the foot of her first essay for me she wrote: "This essay cost me more labour to produce than five children". She must have found the effort rewarding, for she produced many more essays, but no more children.

The two cultures

After almost a century of university adult education activity we are still far from achieving a society in which culture is as widely diffused as it should be in a democratic, affluent society. *The 1919 Report* warned against danger of having a highly educated apex of society based on an uninformed and uncultivated population". In the 1950's, Trenaman, whose research interests spanned broadcasting and adult education, found that this is just what we had achieved[28]. The researches of scholars like Basil Bernstein and Jean Floud point to the conclusion that "social class has a profound influence not merely on educational opportunity, but on educability itself". According to Trenaman, the sociological and literary evidence is that

> there remain among the "working-classes" distinctive patterns of social behaviour and individual characteristics of thought, speech, accent, and even humour, which tend to isolate them and make them suspicious of a cultural tradition which speaks a different language from their own[29].

Those who think that "we are all middle-class now" and that access to higher education is wide open to all, have obviously not read the literature, and have also failed to look at the real world.

It is only twelve years since Richard Hoggart, then a tutor in adult education, produced in *The Uses of Literacy* a picture of working-class life whose reception showed that the society he was describing was as strange to many readers as that of the Trobriand islanders. Brian Jackson's *Working-class Community,* published last year, shows material affluence has not changed the essentials of working-class life. Lady Plowden recently reminded us that only 20% of the population achieve the modest goal of five O-Levels, while Professor Sir Cyril Burt, though a *Black Paper* contributor, admits that "less than half of the working-class children with university ability actually enter". We may have moved a little nearer economic equality, but culturally we are still two nations.

Does it matter?

I know that Hoggart, Jackson and Raymond Williams have shown that working-class life has its own strengths, and that there are more ways of becoming wise than through formal education, but I still find it difficult to raise more than one muted cheer that we now have a society where the traditional bread and circuses for the populace have been replaced by chicken and bingo.

Like Arnold, I want to see culture diffused "from one end of society to the other", though I recognise, as Arnold did not, that this does not merely mean sharing high culture with the masses, but "the creation of a condition in which people as a whole participate in the articulation of meaning and values"[30]. It certanly does not mean, to answer a common objection, foisting an alien culture on unwilling people. Rather does it mean offering them the opportunity to share the experience of the best art, the

best knowledge and ideas of their time. This, as I have already emphasised, can only be done by the willing co-operation of the recipient. I am aware that reference to the "best art", "best knowledge" implies a value judgment, but I shall not explain or defend it here because the assumption that some experiences are instrinsically better than others is a necessary starting point of any educational endeavour. Reject it, and anarchy will indeed replace culture. Yet many people who should know better try to persuade themselves and us that we should accept the present inequalities because the culturally deprived are happy in their deprivation. Miss Marghanita Laski, for example, condemns the expenditure of public money on subsidising the arts for the plausible reason that "many people are, after all, made happy not by high art . . . but by pop art; not by Bach but by Beatles; not by ballet but by dance halls; not by Henry Moore but by plastic herons brooding over garden pools"[31]. If accepted, this would make nonsense of all education, and not only adult education. I do not believe that we should be content to leave people with the poverty of experience provided by plastic herons when they could be helped to enjoy Henry Moore. When Miss Laski offers Bach and Beatles as an equivalent contrast, she shows inadequate experience of popular culture. Without pretending they are equally good, it is possible to enjoy both the Beatles and Bach (I do myself), but no one who appreciates Henry Moore could bear to live with a plastic heron.

Bridging the gap

What, then, is to be done? Adult educators have for years been urged to improve their publicity and try a little harder to reach a wider audience. In the past decade, this has been done, but there is a limit to the expansion that such efforts can produce, if the evidence about the effects of social class on educability are true. Trenaman explicitly warned that even if adult educators redouble their efforts "they are not likely to overcome resistances which have their origin outside the educational field". I believe these resistances are not altogether outside the educational field. They are in part the result of early education which has failed to induce any desire for further education "continued voluntarily in later life". When most children leave school they have 'had' education in more senses than one—Lady Plowden has said they are allergic to education. This is something that those concerned with schooling should be worrying about.

Most people are also the victims of a total environment which is unfavourable to cultural interests, including the ever-present seductiveness of a massive entertainment industry. To blame the majority of people for preferring show-business chatter on television, or *The Sound of Music* in the cinema, to better television or cinema—let alone an evening study course—is like blaming those who live in an unwholesome climate for their ill-health. I should emphasise that I count among this majority of the people, not merely the working-class but most middle-class citizens, whose greater material affluence is often not matched by cultural richness.

We need adult education for all, from the majority whose education finished at the minimum age to the growing minority who have first and even second degrees. Remedial adult education will not be made redundant by improving access to further education for many years to come. At the same time, we need more adult education for the educated, to up-date them in their special subjects and to redress the educational imbalance of the specialist—like the doctor who takes up archaeology, or the physicist who studies literature. However, if I seem to have put special emphasis on

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the needs of the minimum educated, it is because they are the majority of the population, and the ones whose experience and environment least inclines them to pursue education. The history of attempts to cater for the working-class in the Mechanics' Institutes of the nineteenth century and the Workers' Educational Association in this century, both show that the better educated middle class are readier to take advantage of the facilities offered than those for whom they were primarily intended. "Those who have seek for more". This is not surprising, but it is saddening, because it means adult education has not been making its intended contribution to the more equal sharing of culture. To them that have, more is given. Adult education, as done by the universities and the Workers' Educational Association reaches only a tiny minority of the population—about 4%. It is a disgracefully low proportion, even though the influence of this minority is considerable, since many of the natural leaders in the life of the community come from the ranks of adult education students. I have no utopian vision of reaching a hundred per cent of the population, for I have already spoken of the social barriers to great expansion, but the present proportion ought to be at least doubled. It could be with more resources—and greater use of the mass media of press, radio and television.

The mass media

I know that a good deal is already done by these media. Parodoxically I would say that too much is being done, too little achieved. In the twenties, G. K. Chesterton wrote of "Culture and the coming peril". The peril he foresaw was, surprisingly at that time, over-production. Now, with our swollen newspapers, colour supplements, magazines, radio and television, and paperback books by the million, we are all subjected to a barrage of communications that tell us more that we can absorb. Ironically, as I was preparing this lecture, I heard a highly civilized journalist, David Holden, confessing on television that "modern communications merely turn up the decibels in the tower of Babel". Today, the would-be intelligent layman has to switch off occasionally, both literally and figuratively, otherwise he will suffer from "toxic over-doses of unassimilated information".

E. M. Forster used on the title page of his novel *Howard's End* which was first published in the period of Tawney's Longton tutorial class, and before the impact of radio and television, the legend *"Only connect"*. It remains a wise maxim, but today it needs to be supplemented by another: *"Only select"*. For we live in a gigantic supermarket crammed with thousands of dazzling packages cajoling us to buy instant culture, ready mixed understanding and fresh frozen facts. We need adult education, not only to fill a gap, but to clear a space—a space for reflection.

Some years ago, the historian, Arnold Toynbee, deplored the exploitation of basic literacy by the cheap press and political propagandists. He saw in adult education a countervailing force. Marshall McLuhan, that turgid, dazzling pundit of the electronic age, claims that Toynbee's hope was naive, since the methods of adult education cannot compete with the unique appeal of the medium of television. To some extent, McLuhan is right, for whereas the aim of adult education has been like that of the great newspaper editor who sought to make righteousness readable, the magic of much television seems to be to make vulgarity viewable. However, we know that the better educated viewer views less, and is more discriminating that the less educated viewer. Even McLuhan inconsistently admits that education can be used "to combat media fall-out". But the stance of resistance to the mass media is the wrong one for

the educator, partly because there is much that is good about all the mass media, partly because you can't lick them so you must join them. The Open University shows the way, in using radio and television as ingredients in a combined operation to make degree level higher education more generally available. Since people will be allowed to register for courses without committing themselves to a full degree course, many will doubtless use the Open University courses as a means of adult education. This represents a form of competition to existing kinds of adult education. And why not? We should welcome new opportunities in adult education even if they mean a reduction in our own work, though I do not think that they will.

The great innovation of the Open University is that it brings together teams of academics, television and radio producers, and other educational technologists to work together in devising combined teaching systems with as much emphasis on correspondence as on the more publicised use of broadcasting. I would like to see the same team approach applied on a large scale to adult education. The present consultation between broadcasting organisations and adult educators (and I have had experience of it both with ITV and the BBC) is superficial by comparison with what the Open University is to do. The handful of experiments in closer collaboration so far made seem to me to have achieved less than is claimed for them, but they do point the way to more extensive combined operations in the future.

Conclusion

Sir Walter Moberly once said that it was difficult to exaggerate the importance of adult education. Nevertheless we adult educators sometimes succeed in doing it. I hope I have avoided the temptation in this lecture. I have stressed that adult education alone cannot transform society. It must be part of a total cultural strategy which includes better school education, arts centres, civic theatres for both drama and film, art galleries, and the best use of broadcasting at national, regional and local levels. Adult education is not enough, but nothing is enough without adult education. It is indeed "a permanent national necessity". Men like R. H. Tawney were men of culture who were truly apostles of equality, and they saw in university adult education the most effective way of making culture available outside the walls, outside the clique of the cultivated and learned. If we retain their faith and vision we may yet help to achieve a society in which taxi drivers (and company directors) have not merely heard of Auden and Koestler, but actually read them—a society in which the university is no longer regarded as separate from the real world.

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